



Jeanette Hughes
Oral History Transcription
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Summary: Jeannette Hughes speaks about her experience as a transgender woman from her youth in Texas, the homophobia expressed by her classmates during her childhood, her experience with various churches, and moving to and participating in activities in the South Bend area.

0:00:00 [Jamie Wagman]: So, thank you for meeting. So, I'll just say what the day is and my name for the purpose of people who might be listening to this or reading this eventually. I'm Jamie Wagman, and we're here at Saint Mary's on July 17th in 2015. Will you state your name?

[Jeannette Hughes]: Jeannette Hughes.

[JW]: Okay great. And we'll just start at the beginning. So, do you want to tell us a little bit about when you were born, where you were born, and some of the places that you grew up in?

0:00:49 [JH]: I was born in March 1971 in Iowa City, Iowa. And I lived on the west coast in the L.A. area, southwest Missouri, west Texas, and Indiana, and also Dallas. So, all over. Most of my life though, fifteen years, on the west coast.

[JW]: Fifteen years.

[JH]: Combined. I spent most of my life there. And have been in Goshen since 2002.

0:01:21 [JW]: And what led to some of the moves?

[JH]: My dad was a college professor, so he was always... got new job offers. And I was married, after college moved to Dallas, and then the marriage didn't work out and through other connections and through pursuits of my career, I moved to Indiana. Journalism career.

[JW]: And will you take us a little bit slower with the time line? You were born in Iowa City but you only lived there...one year?

[JH]: Six months.

[JW]: Six months. And then where did you move after that?

[JH]: Malibu. Or actually Camarillo, California.

[JW]: How long was that?

[JH]: Until age 5. My dad taught out there.

0:02:13 [JW]: And then you moved from California to?

[JH]: Springfield, Missouri. My dad got a job at Southwest Missouri State.

[JW]: And how long did you live there?

[JH]: Till age 11. Actually, 12. Wait. No. Six years total, so that's 11.

[JW]: And then you moved to Texas?

[JH]: Yes, this was Abilene, Texas. I was there until... end of my junior year of high school. My dad taught out there at a church related college.

[JW]: And what did he teach?

[JH]: Church history. U.S. Church history. Always has taught that.

[JW]: And what did you mom do?

[JH]: In Abilene? She was the manager of a senior center, like a Christian senior center.

[JW]: Okay. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

[JH]: Only child.

0:03:13 [JW]: Only child. Gotcha. So, if you could tell us a little bit of what it was like growing up... I know from our prior conversation, we talked a bit about the church background and the influence of the Church of Christ, so I was hoping you could speak to that a little....

[JH]: Yeah. My whole family is Church of Christ. So, I say that, I mean like, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles. Everybody went to a Church of Christ college. Mostly. Harding University—that's Arkansas. That was like one of the... Have you heard of Harding? Can I ask you questions?

[JW]: Of definitely, absolutely, yes.

[JH]: And. So yeah, and kind of the Church of Christ, it's just very, like, they take the Bible literally. I wouldn't say that they're fundamentalists necessarily, but there's probably some of that. But they Don't use instrumental music because they think, well there's a verse in the Bible that says "thou shall sing to God in your hearts." So, they interpret that to mean no instruments. It's also a verse in the Bible that says, a woman

should not teach a man, or whatever. And so they take that to the point where women cannot teach men.

0:04:28 [JW]: Okay. Or have leadership roles?

[JH]: Have leadership roles. And that's actually shifting now some. But I don't... I haven't been to the Church of Christ in a long time. But yeah, and so...

[JW]: Growing up would you say the women had more submissive roles?

[JH]: Well, I mean, not submissive. They could teach ladies Bible class. They can teach kids. But like, you know, sermons would always be done by men. When you take communion, the men always serve communion. The men would lead communion. ... It's men, men, men. And the women never thought, like the women... Never seemed to mind that. And I...it's like even when I was a kid I didn't even wonder why. It's just, like, this is how it is. Yeah. And now I look back on that and I'm like, why...wouldn't more people question this?

0:05:25 [JW]: What were some of the sermons about? Do you remember them from childhood?

[JH]: Well, when I lived in Missouri there was a preacher that preached forever. Long sermons. And he was obsessed about divorce. And he would rant and rave about divorce and the sin of divorce.

[JW]: Okay.

[JH]: Right. So. Yeah. Other sermons were just based on the New Testament and Jesus. I don't remember a lot of specifics. There weren't bad sermons.

0:05:55 [JW]: Do you feel like you picked up other ideas... Kind of like, "well this just is," about gender from the church?

[JH]: I don't...um...probably the fact that I identified as... Well, I didn't even know what it was but I knew that something in me was different. I never thought that... I mean, I didn't know anybody like that.

[JW]: Right.

[JH]: So, I don't know if that was my church influence, or... but as far as gender, not really.

0:06:33 [JW]: Okay. Yeah. Hm. Interesting. So, part of this project is thinking about the Midwest, and I was hoping we could talk about that a little bit. What do you make of the Midwest? You lived in the South and you lived on the West Coast and you lived abroad. And you lived in the Midwest in a few different kinds of areas from Indiana to Iowa to Missouri. So, what do you make of the Midwest? What, if you had to characterize the Midwest...?

[JH]: My answer's going to be a little different here. I'm guessing. But like, when you think of L.A., you think people are edgy, very cool, you know. You've been to L.A., right?

[JW]: Yes.

[JH]: And so, but when I... I already had like experience. My dad taught at a state university in Missouri, and I had really good memories with... I'm sorry if I'm getting too off...

[JW]: Not at all. Please go on.

0:07:31 [JH]: He took this van trip to see different sights that had to do with U.S. Church History. So, like, I went to Nauvoo, Illinois for the Mormons. New Harmony, Indiana and Shakertown, Kentucky. I went on two of those trips when I was a kid. So, it was me and all these college students. It was a blast. These college students were awesome, you know? And I really liked to be on campus, and stuff. So, that was a good memory. And then I was, my dad, went to Iowa. And I've been to campus out there since and that's a really... it's almost like some parts of the Midwest are actually edgier than the West Coast.

[JW]: Wow.

[JH]: And then my church, too, 'cause now I go to a Mennonite church, but it's a very liberal Mennonite church. Very.

[JW]: Right.

0:08:27 [JH]: And, but I had never been to a Mennonite church before until I moved to Goshen. So, I had this older... he was an older man and he was [a] friend of the family, he invited me. And that was like—opened my eyes. It was outside of my comfort zone because there were people with purple

hair and nose rings. Which was all cool—I had no issue with that. But I'm like, wow, this is different. This is church. And I was never used to seeing those kinds of things in church before. And so it had a profound influence on me as well.

[JW]: Do you think because your dad was a college professor and you were always immersed in that social scene and field trips that that almost gave you a different kind of Midwestern life?

[JH]: Definitely. But I also was raised going to church every Sunday, so there was like two things. 'Cause I remember when we were in Missouri and I lived there, I remember I didn't like church. And I never knew why I didn't like church, but it felt like it didn't really fit with the rest of the week. 'Cause the school that I went to was an on-campus laboratory school.

0:09:37 [JW]: Oh, what does that mean?

[JH]: They called it a laboratory school but basically it was for students that went to Southwest Missouri State who wanted to learn to be teachers.

[JW]: Okay.

[JH]: And so they would go there to learn.

[JW]: Got it. And church was fairly regular in the week, right? It was Sunday, but also...?

[JH]: Wednesday night, Sunday night, Sunday morning. But I never liked church there. And I never really felt at home there. But I never knew why. But I think that's what it was. I think looking back there was this disconnect. Like, here's my dad's university and this is a really cool place and these people are really awesome and here's church and these people should be really cool people and awesome but they weren't.

But I had no word for that at that point.

0:10:28 [JW]: What were your parents' roles like in the church?

[JH]: That particular church was not very welcoming. I don't know if it was the Ozarks. But my dad taught a class and he helped write a book there but they just never feltt...

[JW]: At home?

[JH]: At home. And my mother, I don't remember. Well, at other churches she's taught, you know, ladies Bible classes. So, yeah, they've always been really involved in church.

[JW]: And did you go to public school then? Growing up, was it public from place to place?

[JH]: That laboratory school was not. It wasn't really private, it wasn't public. It was kind of with the university, but the university was public. But it wasn't part of the public school system. So that's where I went to fifth grade and then in Abeline... Yeah, basically, from then on I went to public school.

0:11:18 [JW]: And what did you do growing up for fun? What were some of the activities or what interested you, just so we know a little bit more about who you are?

[JH]: Normal boyhood, which is really weird. I played soccer. I loved golf. I played lots of golf. I was really into sports. And yeah, hung out with my friends. Just did, you know, normal things, just... what you think of as very normal.

[JW]: So when you're saying "normal" do you mean traditional activities associated with boys?

[JH]: Hot wheel cars.

[JW]: Monster trucks?

[JH]: Not monster trucks. Matchbox—do you remember those? And hot wheels. And making forts. You know. Going hiking in the woods, just normal, I mean, not so much monster trucks.

0:12:13 [JW]: Gotcha. And what about school? What was school like for you? Did you like school growing up?

[JH]: I did.

[JW]: And did you take to writing from a young age?

[JH]: I was always good at it. I never always liked it, but I was always good at it. I was told I was good at it.

0:12:33 [JW]: And so. I know that last time we met, you talked a little bit about some of the identity stuff we talked about. Like, gender identity and also sexual orientation. So, I was hoping you could talk a little bit about that. You mentioned specifically asking some cousins to call you Sandy. So, I asked you to think about that a little bit—looking back on that now. Was that a pivotal moment and could you speak to that moment a little bit?

[JH]: Yeah, it was pivotal. I didn't know it was but... I don't know why even now I asked them to do that, call me Sandy, but I felt like Sandy. Whatever, I didn't know what that means.

[JW]: And how old were you then?

[JH]: Uh, five. Five or six.

[JW]: Did they call you? What was their reaction?

[JH]: I think they did. It's hard to remember.

0:13:30 [JW]: But you, looking back, it seems like that moment meant something in understanding who you are?

[JH]: Mm-hm. I can expand on that. I don't know what to say.

[JW]: Absolutely. Well, anything you'd like to say. Really. I don't want to put words in your mouth. But that was kind of our conversation last time that that was maybe one—was it one of the first times that you articulated out loud?

[JH]: It's the earliest memory that I have. But I didn't know... didn't know that I could, you know, be a girl. So I didn't even, I couldn't say at that point that I had to be a girl. It wasn't like that. I didn't hate being a boy.

[JW]: Okay.

[JH]: You know. At that point I was just like, okay, I want to be called Sandy. Looking back, I think that was one of the first clues that...

0:14:22 [JW]: Right. What were some of the next clues?

[JH]: Oh. Before I go on, is there like anything that's off limits?

[JW]: No.

[JH]: You could delete stuff, right?

[JW]: Yeah. But it's not in my nature.

[JH]: Okay. 'Cause I don't think I told you this part. But I remember I would go into the bathroom when I had to use the bathroom, and I would sit to use the bathroom. And that was a big deal to me too.

[JW]: Okay. Because?

[JH]: Cause that's how women did it. Girls did it. And once again, I didn't, you know, I just did it.

0:14:59 [JW]: And what about the clothing? We talked about that too.

[JH]: Yeah. And once again, this is a little bit embarrassing, this part, but I remember, like, very early on, like I had normal white underwear like kids. But I would, like, wear it way up high. You know, like, you know? I would be like, oh this, it wasn't girls, but....and that was kind of a first memory now too looking back at that.

[JW]: That's interesting, thinking about it, yeah...

[JH]: Right, but I had no sisters. But when my parents were gone I would often get my mom's clothes, try them on, see how they fit. I was always like, wow, this is really cool. But I didn't know why it was cool. There were like no words. Like, what is this and what does this mean. It was just kind of like surfacing up.

0:15:52 [JW]: Did your mom ever talk about it with you, or did she know, or did your Dad know?

[JH]: She found...one time they got home before....and I had to hide them really fast so I hid them in the attic, and then they were up in the attic somehow for some reason and they found this bag of clothes—and obviously they didn't put them there.

[JW]: Did they confront you or talk about it?

[JH]: They asked me about it and I think I lied. I don't know. I don't remember. I mean, it was never a huge deal. They weren't angry or anything. But yeah.

0:16:23 [JW]: And you mentioned to me last time that Texas stands out as being more, I guess, trying time... That you felt that you weren't, I don't know. How would you characterize Texas?

[JH]: You mean my first time in Texas? High school, or when I was married?

[JW]: Your first time.

[JH]: I forget what I shared. But... I had lots of friends when I was in Missouri. Like, lots of friends. And I was an out and out nerd when I moved to Texas. Like, I was picked on. I was like the outcast. And I didn't know why. And it really hurt. And it's...yeah. I don't think I shared that part, did I?

[JW]: No, you didn't share that part.

[JH]: What part are you referring to?

0:17:09 [JW]: I remember you saying that Texas was harder. That when you moved to California from Texas that there was a real shift for you then, socially, but that you had a girlfriend in Texas and it was hard to leave.

[JH]: Yeah, it was hard to leave her.

[JW]: Right. So, you felt sort of isolated. But then you did meet...

[JH]: Yeah, that nerdiness didn't last long. By the time I moved it was fine. But I never liked Texas. I never liked Texas that much though—the whole culture. Both times I was there it didn't fit me at all.

[JW]: How would you explain the culture to people who haven't been to Texas?

[JH]: Jock culture. Even though I liked sports, it's almost like, if you're not a football jock, then...I don't know.

[JW]: Then who are you?

0:18:01 [JH]: Yeah. I mean, that's a little simplistic. I remember, too, like, church, like cool kids at the church and they would act like... It didn't matter if we were at church, they would still be the cool kids. There was a lot of, you know, these people are this group, these people aren't. I don't know. It

was just kind of like... I remember what you wore was really important. What you had on your shirt. Your Ralph Lauren, or... I remember being obsessed with what—this has nothing to do with trans, but I just remember wanting one of those shirts, and my parents saying it was too much money. But whatever.

[JW]: And then what was—

[JH]: Oh, I remember one thing. I remember that when I was in eighth grade, you know, seventh grade, there was like that “gay bridge.” It was junior high school. There was this court yard and in the corner of one of the corners of the courtyard there was this archway that you could walk across, and nobody dared walk on that because if you did that meant that you were gay.

[JW]: That was a rumor?

0:19:15 [JH]: Well, not rumor, but just kind of like, you just don’t dare because that was “the” bridge that you walk on if you’re gay. So, nobody walked on that bridge ever, because if you did that means you were gay—and being gay was not a good thing.

[JW]: This would have been the... ‘80s, yeah.

[JH]: Yeah. So maybe it would have also influenced the way I thought about myself then too. Not that I was gay. But. You know. Trans. And I wouldn’t even say back I even knew that I was trans. But I was, obviously. But maybe that influenced the way that I thought about myself.

0:19:53 [JW]: You also mentioned something your mother said to you once even just in terms of when you asked what being gay was. What was that conversation like?

[JH]: I remember... I was just very curious as a kid. Like, how do gay people have sex? I just didn’t know, really honest. And I sort of remember her saying, “Well, you know, they have it in their bottom.” Whatever. But it was not like informative, it was more like, this is gross and this is wrong. Bottoms are not made to do that, and stuff. So...

[JW]: And did her saying that effect you, do you think?

[JH]: Yeah. The way that I viewed gays. ‘Cause I was homophobic. Oh, and I have another memory. In Abilene, Texas, my first job, I worked at

this steak house that every high school kid...not every that a lot of my friends worked at. And at one point we were eating there, my parents and I, and there was a trans woman that was eating there. And you don't see, at that point in the '80s in Abilene, Texas that was pretty rare. And I remember my mom pointing and saying—I forget exactly what she said, basically it was kind of like, "That's a man." And I remember my thought was kind of like, ew, weird, you know, like, that's not right, she should not be doing that. Or, he should not be doing that. He should not be here. You know, this is wrong. Mmhmm.

0:21:24 [JW]: Interesting. Right. Well, I'd love to take us through the journey of how you shifted from thinking that. Did moving to California at age 17 start that process for you?

[JH]: Looking back, yes.

[JW]: How so?

[JH]: L.A. is a much bigger city than Abilene, Texas, so you get exposed to a lot more things.

[JW]: So what kinds of things were you exposed to?

[JH]: Well, I'll just back up too. I've always loved cities. That's something I can date way back. 'Cause my parents and I used to take long road trips to visit relatives, so I remember when we went through a city, like, a bigger city, I would just get so excited. When we got to the outskirts, I would try to like, pretend—or not pretend, but determine when we actually got to the official outskirts. And then as we got into the city and there were more roads and cars and traffic and overpasses, I would just get so excited. And so always loved cities.

0:22:27 And so, moving to L.A. was kind of like... I didn't want to move, because I didn't want to leave behind my friends, but then once I was there I was like, oh... Of course I want to here. And then I just loved to get in my car and just go see things in L.A. So one of the places I went to a lot was Hollywood and also West Hollywood. Looking back, I don't know why, but I think maybe, I don't know, just maybe has to do with me and my identity. I'm not sure. But I saw lots of gay people. Different people, down there. And gay bars. And other stuff. And then there were, you know, these alternative weekly newspapers that you could get for free, and it listed all these places you could go. And I'm like wow, this is kind of cool.

0:23:14 [JW]: Did you feel like you had a community?

[JH]: No. Well. Like, for that, in L.A.? Not yet. I had a community, but once again it was just normal, like all of my friends in college were really men, other men. And it was just normal, you know.

[JW]: Right. So, you finished up your last year of high school then, at that point?

[JH]: Yeah, in southern California. And then I went to college out there. Christian college though, so... Pepperdine.

[JW]: Will you speak about Pepperdine a little bit? So, your dad was teaching there and did you know in high school that you wanted to go to where your dad was?

[JH]: Uh, it's interesting. Um, I kind of followed everybody else in my family as far as what they do for college. Most of the people, they go to a college that's in the Church of Christ. So, I visited Harding as a high school senior. I visited Abilene Christian. Abilene, Texas, where my Dad used to teach. He went to Harding, my parents went at Harding. And then I visited, obviously, Pepperdine 'cause that's where my dad taught. And I chose Pepperdine mainly because it's in Malibu. I mean, who wouldn't want to go...yeah..

0:24:34 [JW]: And what was it like transitioning from high school to college?

[JH]: Freshman year was kind of hard. I guess it's probably hard for a lot of seniors, I bet. I don't know. Not hard, but just kind of like, it was so different than high school. And I had OCD in my freshman year really badly, and that influenced it too. I didn't go to a lot of my classes. I had to take a year off in college and work.

[JW]: After the first year?

[JH]: After the third year.

0:25:03 [JW]: Were you focused on writing in college? What did you study?

[JH]: I majored in international studies not really knowing what I wanted to do. I thought hotel management at the time. Yeah, I've always loved hotels.

[JW]: And did you travel in those years of college?

[JH]: Yeah. Um, there's a thing through my college called "Let's Start Talking." And it's like a short-term mission thing, and so I went to Asia. Bangkok, Thailand. And basically you teach English one on one to people, but you use Luke, the Gospel of Luke. And at that point, I mean, I didn't have any issues with that then—I do now—as far as us going. Whatever. But I think the other motivation was I got to go to Asia.

0:26:00 [JW]: Right. And what was it like going to Bangkok?

[JH]: I fell in love. I loved the food and the people. And it was the first place where trans people are very accepted. Did you know that? Okay. And have you been to Thailand?

[JW]: No, I've studied that a little bit. That's interesting and so was that something that you saw...?

[JH]: Yeah. Well, like I taught. There's this university in Bangkok called Ramkhamhaeng university. It's one of the biggest universities in the world. It's like an open university. And where I was was called the Ramkhamhaeng Christian Center. And it's run by. Well, it's not really missionary 'cause he's from Bangkok. It's overseen by the Church of Christ of the United States. Actually, you've heard of Leelah Alcorn, I'm sure?

[JW]: I don't know. I don't think so.

[JH]: In Ohio, she was that trans teenager who stepped in front of the truck. It was her church; she's Church of Christ, and it was her church that supported the Thai missionary who I was working for.

[JW]: That's so interesting.

[JH]: Yeah, that's a whole aside. But, anyway... A lot of them, well, college students from that university would come to that Center to learn English. They didn't really care about the God stuff, they just wanted to learn English. So I remember I saw my first trans person, a woman, there. And I was like, wow, that's kind of cool. And I kept, you know, looking over at her and thinking how awesome that was.

0:27:49 [JW]: Wow. And noticing how she moved through the community?

[JH]: Yeah. And she was accepted. And that's was what really hit me. Wow, I mean they just act toward her like she's just one more person—not some weirdo or whatever.

[JW]: Right. At that point in time, could you see... could you relate to her?

[JH]: Mm-hm.

[JW]: Yeah. Could you see making that shift in your life at that point?

[JH]: I don't think I thought of it yet. I mean, it was still very under the surface. But what I did though do... One time, I went out by myself in Bangkok because I knew how to get around, and I went to, like, this fashion district and bought this women's blouse and a belt. One of those thin belts to wear. I had no idea what I was doing. And then I went around Bangkok with no wig or anything. I didn't have much hair then either. Well, you didn't know that, but whatever. And so, I was like, okay, this is interesting.

[JW]: Just to experience what it was like?

[JH]: And I got some looks. I got some looks, you know. So that was kind of interesting too.

0:28:50 [JW]: Definitely. Right. And did you take those experiences back to California with you?

[JH]: I can't remember... I think I was already a little bit into that too in California.

[JW]: Buying clothes from time to time?

[JH]: Yeah, and there was a place called Lydia's T.V. fashions. Which I'm guessing TV meant "transvestite." I don't like that word. But it was in Van Nuys, you know in the San Fernando Valley. And so, I remember going there... And I remember seeing my first, you know, my first ever trans people there too. And some of it made a very good impression, and some... I remember one trans woman, she was there and she had really horrible body odor, and I just remember thinking this is not a person who I want to be like. But other ones I thought were cool. I never had the courage to actually go there as a woman. It was just always. Yeah.

0:29:53 [JW]: Did you talk to them about their journeys?

[JH]: No. I was kind of nervous. I just looked at the shoes and looked at the outfits and I usually left.

[JW]: Gotcha. Then you graduated from Pepperdine. What did you do the year that you took off?

[JH]: In college? Yeah. I worked at Robinson's department store, which is like Macy's, and I sold linens.

[JW]: And then went back and finished up. And then when you graduated did you stay in California at that point?

[JH]: Yes, I graduated in '96, and then I kept going to Bangkok every year until '97. And I met my past, well, ex-wife now in Bangkok and we got married.

0:30:48 [JW]: And we talked about this a little before... What was it like going there and meeting your ex-wife, and what did you learn from the marriage that wound up helping you? So, there's a lot of questions in there. Why don't you take us from the beginning there.

[JH]: Um. First of all, I don't know why I got married. 'Cause I liked being single. And I also had a girl in California who we hit it off a lot. She was from Israel, actually. She was really cool. She was very open minded. I don't know. So, looking back I'm like, why did I do this? And I think it was that I didn't want to lose Bangkok. So, it was almost like I married Bangkok instead of marrying this woman.

[JW]: That's poetic.

[JH]: I wish I had known that then. I think I did know it then though; I just didn't want to admit it to myself.

[JW]: Right.

0:31:46 [JH]: So yeah. So, we got married. And it was, like, awful from day one. I think part of it was that she wanted a very traditional marriage with a husband that makes most of the money. The husband supports. She cooks. The husband fixes the car. It's almost like, you know, the husband takes care of the wife. The wife looks beautiful. The husband is... There's a word in Thailand...for somebody... a bully?

[JW]: A bully?

[JH]: It's not a bully it's more "bully," an adjective, to say, like, "he's bully." So that was good for her. If she had a husband who was bully. Meaning my husband's macho or makes a lot of money or is not to be messed with.

[JW]: What's the Thai word?

[JH]: I don't know. I think it's "bully." So, they have some words like that. That they adopt.

[JW]: That's interesting.

[JH]: Yeah. And I realized I'm not bully. It doesn't mean I'm not kickass. But I'm not bully.

0:32:55 [JW]: Absolutely. And you knew that all along?

[JH]: Yeah, and she wanted somebody bully and so, that doesn't work.

[JW]: How did you even connect?

[JH]: We didn't. It was miserable. It was really bad.

[JW]: How did you meet?

[JH]: She was a student of English at the center I taught at.

[JW]: Did you live in Bangkok together for a while? Or did you come back...?

[JH]: I came back and I took care of all the paperwork taken care of to get her over here.

0:33:30 [JW]: And then you both moved to Texas?

[JH]: Well, she came to California, and then we both had mutual friends in Texas and so she pushed me and pushed me to move to Dallas. And I didn't want to leave L.A., but I did. A lot of bad decisions there. But I wouldn't be in Indiana if it weren't for that.

[JW]: Why?

[JH]: I never would have left L.A. and I moved to Indiana because things were not working out in Dallas at all. I was miserable. So, I thought, I don't

have anything to lose by living to Indiana. But I don't think I would have ever moved to Indiana from L.A. So, I'm kind of happy actually.

[JW]: That it happened this way?

0:00:00 [JH]: I mean, somehow, you know, sometimes that's how life works, you know. Yeah. So, I mean, I don't have any regrets I guess.

0:34:22 [JW]: What was it like living in Texas the second time, and I remember you saying that the church was still a big part of your life at that point?

[JH]: Well all of our mutual friends were missionaries, you know, American husbands and Thai wives, missionaries. It was kind of unhealthy actually.

[JW]: Why?

[JH]: I think that whole dynamic was unhealthy. Just... Do you need me to expand on that?

[JW]: If you want.

[JH]: Like, why did all the Americans have wives from Bangkok?

[JW]: Sure...

[JH]: Um, it was very based in church, patriarchal, now, when I look back on it. I have one of those friends who... He went to a church. He was visiting some of his relatives, and there was a woman got up and began to lead and he had to leave and find a church that didn't use women. It was that important to him. But then, you have those attitudes that keep women down, Thai women. Those Thai women, down. So, it's like, they're in there, you know, where their husbands think they need to be with them. But their husbands, they put them in boxes too. You need to be bulky. So, there's these roles that we have to fill because, you know.

0:35:52 [JW]: Did you feel that kind of oppression yourself because of your gender identity? Did you feel it directed to you? Maybe not verbalized, but did you feel it?

[JH]: When I was a kid?

[JW]: Growing up, with the church, being patriarchal.

[JH]: No. And I don't know why I didn't now. I guess that's all I ever knew. I had nothing to compare it too. I do remember, we went to an Episcopalian church for a Christmas Eve service, and I remember asking my parents, "Why we can't move to this church?" Because I liked it better.

[JW]: What did they say?

[JH]: I don't remember.

0:36:27 [JW]: So, you said the marriage was difficult from day one, but you also said... and this was in your mid-twenties? Am I getting the time frame... Twenty-six or so?

[JH]: Yeah, married at twenty-seven.

[JW]: You also said it helped you though... it helped you figure some things out. So how did that work?

[JH]: Can you give me a little bit more? I'm sorry.

[JW]: I think you, I remember you saying that the marriage helped you in your journey, like that it shed light on your own identity for you.

[JH]: Okay. This might not be what I said then, but I do remember that sex was non-existent. And when I look back at that it's obvious why. Because she wanted this bully man, um, can I use profanity?

[JW]: Sure.

[JH]: To "fuck her."

[JW]: Right.

[JH]: And how do I do that? You know? And what else did I learn? Crap. I don't remember what I said. I'm sure...

0:37:39 [JW]: That's okay. But when you decided to leave the marriage, did you decide to make some other life decisions that led you to where you are now? Was it pivotal in the trajectory of your life?

[JH]: Yeah. And I don't know that I told you everything.

[JW]: Probably not.

[JH]: So let me... I told you how I moved to Goshen right, my dad's connection? I'll repeat that?

[JW]: Absolutely.

[JH]: So I was working for Enterprise Rent-A-Car in Dallas, and I was in management, but it was not a job that I loved. It was long hours and rent cars. Burn out, burn out, burn out. And so, um, and then I quit, actually. I don't know if I told you this. I quit without consulting my then wife. And I didn't really care because things were going so badly with our marriage. I'm like, why should I consult, I'll just do what I want to do. But then I still had to make money, so I got a job at Nordstrom, in Dallas. I was the head cashier for the women's shoes department, which is awesome, I don't know if you...

[JW]: Yeah.

0:38:48 [JH]: So that was awesome, seeing all the cool shoes and stuff. But once again, I didn't want to work at Nordstrom for the rest of my life. So, my dad, he came to the Goshen College pre-faculty retreat, pre-year retreat in 2002. And at that point I knew that I wanted to be a journalist. And this was after 9/11. And I watched news conferences from Kuwait and Qatar and stuff, and I knew that I, I would like to do that. And so, my dad met a professor in journalism at Goshen College who used to work at the *New York Times* and now he's a teacher at Goshen and he mentioned me to him. And so, this person said, why don't you have me move to Goshen and he would serve as my mentor and I could take his classes. And so, at first, I was like, no way. I don't want to go to Indiana. I'd been here once I think, maybe twice. But I decided well, what else am I...? If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. So, I went. And. Yeah. And so...

0:39:55 [JW]: And that was at the tail end of the marriage or you were already divorced?

[JH]: Tail end. And then she moved later. I came first, and then I went back down there and then we came up with a U-Haul, and my dad helped us move. She was here a month. And we were fighting, just, nonstop, nonstop. It was horrible. So, at one point, she said, "What if I just go back to Dallas and then you can come back when you're done with this year." And at that point I'm like, great. Because we're fighting so much, just, get out of here. But then once she moved, like, the next day, I think I was like, this is my wife. And so, I panicked. So, I drove down there.

[JW]: Oh.

0:40:45 [JH]: And I found her. And I begged her to come back. And she refused. And that was how the marriage ended. She just said, "I'm not coming back." And so at that point that was awful, but that was like the best thing that could have happened for me.

[JW]: And then you went back?

[JH]: I came back to Goshen. I don't think it took very long to realize that I didn't really miss her.

0:41:11 [JW]: Did you start taking classes again? How did you build a life?

[JH]: I was taking classes at Goshen College. This was fall of 2002. And that November, um, I got a job at the *Farmer's Exchange*, which was in New Paris, Indiana. And it's an agricultural paper, you know like a weekly family-owned newspaper. So, I was their associate editor for 11 years. And that was a fun job while it lasted.

[JW]: You're kind of city person, so how did you take to covering ag?

[JH]: I remember it was just so new to me that it was really exciting. The first auction I went to, I'm like, wow, this is pretty fun. I actually liked it. And I also got to go to Indianapolis a lot, because they [inaudible] winter conferences, summer things too. So, I loved going to Indy, so I was able to explore Indy and a lot of my stuff took me to the suburbs of Chicago. The Indiana side. Valparaiso. Near enough Chicago that when I was done I could go over to Chicago. And I had Wednesdays off, because we put together the newspaper Tuesday nights and we were often there late, and I also worked a lot of weekends. So, I remember having most Wednesdays off. So for a lot of years there I would go to Chicago on Wednesdays and have a lot of fun.

0:42:36 [JW]: What would you do?

[JH]: That's when I found Transformations by Rori. Which, I could go...

[JW]: Please, yeah...

[JH]: Very early on after moving here, I had gone to Lydia's TV Fashions in L.A. And then, during my four years in Dallas I basically seemed to be working or fighting with my... and I really didn't do anything fun in Dallas.

So maybe I would have liked Dallas more had I been able to explore it. So, as soon as I came here and she wasn't here I was like, okay, I want to get to know Chicago. And I had only been to Chicago once, ever. And so... And then I researched places to go for trans people in Chicago 'cause it's a big city.

So, I found this place called Transformations by Rori. It's in Arlington Heights and it's close to the airport and they offer makeovers and sell clothing and basically whatever you need. And, you know, it's, yes. So I went there and I was very nervous but the person there, her name is Rori. Very, very nice person. And um, yeah.

0:43:50 [JW]: What did you do the first time? Did you...

[JH]: Just met her, I think. She brought me things. But I kept going back and I kept going back and I met other people who shopped there. And I found out that they all went to this club called Hunter's on the weekend which is in Elk Grove Village, by the airport. And that was like the place at that point to go. And so.

[JW]: And this would have been?

[JH]: 2004, 5, 6. I think... I think all of this began really started in August of '04.

[JW]: So you'd go to Chicago on Wednesdays and then go back up on the weekends?

[JH]: Yeah, and it wasn't every week like that. But a lot of weekends and a lot of Wednesdays. So I wasted a lot of gas. It was a lot of fun.

0:44:38 [JW]: And so, it seemed like that was sort of the beginning of a trans community for you again since L.A.?

[JH]: Yeah. And this is really when my trans journey really began to come out of the shadows. Like, aha, this makes sense.

[JW]: What made it... I guess, was it Rori herself? Or meeting people?

[JH]: Both. Both. And then just being in Chicago. Chicago is a really cool city, you know, it's more left than right, and so many things to do. Yeah. And I just fell in love with Chicago.

0:45:18 [JW]: Gotcha. You mentioned an instance that happened at Hunter's. That there was some discrimination after a while? Do you mind sharing that?

[JH]: Yeah. A friend and I went to Hunter's and um, we were asked to show our IDs. It's a club. So that's not out of the ordinary. And then they didn't let us in because our pictures didn't match the way we looked like in person. And that's the first time I ever felt any sort of discrimination based on being trans. And it hurt. You know. Yeah.

[JW]: And so, did the community stop going there completely then?

[JH]: Mm-hm.

[JW]: Did they change their policy?

[JH]: They, like, had a few trans people there that they let in. And... But no, they didn't really change the policy. Some people, you know, they just quit going there. That was the end of an era. Because that's where people used to go. That was like *the* place.

0:46:16 [JW]: And you wound up meeting people that were from Indiana, from Mishawaka, through Rori, right? And it sort of took an 80 mile journey to meet people that were actually pretty close to you geographically?

[JH]: Well, they have a message board system on the Internet. So, I met a lot of people through there. And one of them was in South Bend. Andrea.

[JW]: And there was a GLBT support group in Goshen, is that right? Were you going to that group?

[JH]: I was on the Board at that center. And it just kind of... I don't know why, it just kind of fizzled.

[JW]: In terms of activism?

[JH]: Yeah.

0:47:02 [JW]: Gotcha. Yeah. So, you mentioned that you had a makeover at Rori's, maybe not the first time but after you started going there. What was that experience like?

[JH]: Well, I had no clue how to put on makeup. I didn't even know what to do as far as clothing. And this is probably common for a lot of trans

people. It's like, what do I do? My whole life I'd worn men's clothing. So, well, actually, I don't think I told you this. This is kind of humorous. Can I?

[JW]: Sure.

[JH]: When I first was in a lingerie shop, but they sell other stuff too, in Dolton, Illinois. Do you know where that is? It's like a Southern suburb. So, I found it. So, I went there and I bought a white top with like, not ruffles, it was kind of like wavy or something.

[JW]: Lacy?

[JH]: Not lacy, but waves or something. I don't know. And it was really way too big. It was ugly. [laughs] And I got this black skirt that was like this long black skirt, you know, that came all the way down. And then I got this wig that was really dark, dark, dark haired wig. Short. And it was a cheap, cheap wig at this place.

[JW]: Oh.

0:48:23 [JH]: Uh-huh. And I remember this place was very disorganized. So, if you wanted something, she'd have to go and hunt. There was no semblance of organization. Like, "Oh, let's see if I can find this." It was really funny. So, then I went to Woodfield Mall—do you know Woodfield in Schaumburg? It's like a real huge mall in Schaumburg. And I had changed I think in my car. And I had lipstick I think, or something. But I had no clue. So, I'm putting on the lipstick. Put on the wig. Put on the skirt. Put on the horrible top. And I had no shoes to wear other than my Wolverine work boots, which was...

[JW]: Right. Quite an image.

[JH]: Yeah. And then I decided that it would be okay to go into Woodfield Mall looking like that.

[JW]: And?

[JH]: Nothing else happened. But when I look back, that's really funny actually.

[JW]: Was that one of the first times that you'd ever gone out in public?

[JH]: I went out occasionally in Hollywood, but once again, I had no clue. Yeah. And I don't know why, well, yeah, I do know why. I mean, why would I have a clue.

0:49:33 [JW]: Did Rori help? Rori herself, or folks there, help you figure out what you wanted to look like?

[JH]: Mm-hm. They'd give me advice and tips.

[JW]: So, they gave you a makeover.

[JH]: Yeah. I sat in a chair and they made me over with makeup, and then they have you put on a wig—pick a wig that fits your face. And I couldn't quit looking myself in the mirror, like this person, who is this person? It was pretty cool.

0:50:09 [JW]: Were you still going by your old name at that point?

[JH]: Until I saw myself in the mirror. And then, um, Jeannette just popped out at me. That name.

[JW]: By seeing your reflection?

[JH]: Yeah. I just looked like a Jeannette. I have no idea why.

[JW]: Did you articulate that out loud at the time?

[JH]: Yeah. 'Cause I think she said, you know, I think Rori asked me what my name was 'cause I think that's what came out. Jeannette.

[JW]: And did you start using that name?

[JH]: I did, right from there.

[JW]: Right from there.

[JH]: Yeah. And I think that was August of '04.

0:50:48 [JW]: Did you tell folks at work then? How did that work?

[JH]: At my work? Well, they did not... Even then, I still I mean even then, I still didn't know that I was really trans. I mean, I don't know. I mean, there's many kinds. You know.

[JW]: Yes.

[JH]: I mean, I didn't know where this was all headed. And I still liked my job at that point. And, once again... Oh yeah, I think I mentioned this before. I learned the culture of agriculture, which I did not know before. But I remember going to an Indiana Farm Bureau Meeting in Indianapolis, and they had this huge book about what we believe, what we want to see happen as policy. And one of the very first things was we believe marriage was between one man and one woman. And I remember thinking, "How does that have to do with agriculture?" But it's very, they're very conservative.

0:51:46 [JW]: It was a telling detail.

[JH]: Yeah. What I learned, really, about Indiana agriculture—it's mainstream, they're white, and they go to church, and it's very male oriented, and very not LGBT. And I think I mentioned to you that I wanted to do an article—I would still like to—on gay and lesbian 4-H'ers.

[JW]: Yeah, you did mention that.

[JH]: On my own, obviously. But I don't know how I'd find them because they're not out. And hopefully that will change. So, I never even... I knew that I could never... I remember one time at work I got back, I forget if it was after a Wednesday or after a weekend but my boss noticed that I had what looked like eyeliner, or something. And he's like, "I don't know what that is." Go to the bathroom, get it off. And then I had a human rights commission sticker on my car, do you remember? And my boss comes to me, my editor... He's like, "You have an equal sign on the back of your car." And I kind of wanted to say, yeah? You know, but. So then I took it off.

0:53:02 [JW]: He felt like he needed a confrontation with you?

[JH]: Yeah. And that's all he said. He didn't ask me. But I thought, maybe I shouldn't have it on there so I took it off. That probably wasn't the best thing to [inaudible]? I don't know.

[JW]: Did it change the way you felt about working there?

[JH]: No, because I knew it was like that. People there, they're also racist. I mean, not all of them. But they... I would hear things about race and

Mexicans, blacks. So, I kind of knew how they would feel about anybody who is LGBT.

[JW]: So you said you started using the name but to whom?

[JH]: To people who I was out to.

[JW]: And who were those people?

[JH]: My friends that I went out with in Chicago, basically at that point. So they knew me. Nobody else did. Just those people. So, I went out basically most weekends.

0:53:54 [JW]: What about your parents? We haven't talked about them in a while. You eventually did talk to your parents, but when was that or how did you feel about going to them at this point?

[JH]: I let them know very early on. I think event as early as, like, maybe '04. And I don't think they knew what to make any of it. And I remember once I was on Rori's website, I went to visit my folks in California and I was on my dad's computer and I wanted to see the message boards for Rori's and my dad saw it. He was like, "You shouldn't be on that website," or something. He didn't know what it was he had seen word, you know, transgender. And then my mom was like, you know, like she could never see photos of me. She said if I see even one photo of you, I can't get that image out of my head. And so, it took me years for her to even see a photo of me. Which hurt. And then this is. Okay, this is unrelated. But I think it actually is related. And this has to do with church.

0:55:05 [JW]: And did you have any connection to the Church of Christ when you moved back to Goshen?

[JH]: I went to one. Do you know who, um, Greg Sterling is? Does that ring a bell?

[JW]: No.

[JH]: He used to be a Dean at Notre Dame and he's now the Dean at Yale Divinity School.

[JW]: Oh.

[JH]: Yeah. But he is Church of Christ and he went to the Warsaw Church of Christ, and so he invited me to go there once, and so I did once. And that was the only time that I had been. And then when I visited my folks in California I would go.

[JW]: Gotcha.

[JH]: Yeah. But that's pretty much the only time?

0:55:42 [JW]: So church kind of petered out in your life a little?

[JH]: Church of Christ did.

[JW]: Church of Christ.

[JH]: Yeah, but not church in general. How are we on time?

[JW]: We're good on time. I'm in no rush. And I know a lot of things were happening at once at this point in your life.

[JH]: Don't want to wear you out. Okay. Where was I going? Oh yeah, I said that this was unrelated.

So, I had a girlfriend in 2004, 5, I can't remember. Um, and around the same time this is kind of all happening, and she was pretty cool. She, I don't know, it wouldn't have worked ever. Just, I don't. It just didn't. But she was cool. I mean, does that make sense?

0:56:34 [JW]: Was she cool, like, accepting?

[JH]: Yeah, she was fun. But it just...

[JW]: It wasn't meant to be?

[JH]: It wasn't meant to be. Nothing against her at all, it just wasn't meant to be. Yeah. So, for a short while though we lived together. We weren't married. And she was in my house. She's from Elkhart. But she, so she lived with me in my house in Goshen. And my parents were very morally opposed to that.

[JW]: Because you were living together before marriage?

[JH]: Outside marriage. So, they went to one of their friends that my dad went to Iowa with who is a fellow professor at Pepperdine. And he taught psychology and he was a counselor, therapist, whatever. So, he knows... He's known me since I was a baby. So, they asked him what he would do if one of his kids...

[JW]: Was living with someone?

[JH]: Yeah. And he advised them, and it still pisses me off to this day that this happened. Basically, they said, we will visit you but not on your turf. We won't visit you at your house. So, like, if we come to visit you but in Michigan and you can come to Michigan and see us. Or, we'll go to Chicago but we will not visit you at your house. Which, that raises so many questions for me like what if I don't want to be married ever?

[JW]: Right.

[JH]: What if I...I don't know. It's kind of like...plus I'm just, you know, at that point I was in my early 30s. At what point do you just let your kids be who they are? Adults. So, I put that once again, I put that in the church kind of idea. I remember my dad used the word "shacking up." Like, you're shacking up. We weren't shacking up. What does that even mean?

0:58:19 [JW]: Was the divorce hard for them to take?

[JH]: No, because they couldn't stand my wife. They urged me even... The night before the wedding my mom urged me not to do it.

[JW]: Really. Okay. So... So, that made somewhat of a gulf between you and your parents, that decision that they made? And then... Was that before you came out as transgender to them or not? Living together?

[JH]: Yeah. I think right before. Yeah. I think it's no, for maybe a few more months. And I don't think I ever told them I'm transgender at that point. I just told them. I don't know what I said. Kind of like, I do this. I go here. I can't remember. It's been so long.

0:59:06 [JW]: But you also told your extended family, too? The family that had the annual reunions?

[JH]: Yeah. Recently I told them.

[JW]: And how was their reception?

[JH]: The ones who had me on Facebook, they are nice. That I can tell. It's like arm length nice. And then other ones, they just basically said, "I will always know you as Andy and I can't accept this." Andy is my given name. And "you're Andy" in my eyes. Whatever. Yeah.

[JW]: And so, will you go to the reunion anymore?

[JH]: I don't think so. Just, you know. Plus, you know, it's in rural Arkansas. And we go to a Church of Christ down there. Sunday morning, northeast rural Arkansas, I don't know. I don't see how that would be fun.

0:59:58 [JW]: Right. So you told your parents pretty, like, eleven years ago? Have they been through their own journey or conversations? What are they like today?

[JH]: Very slowly. I've been out with them. They met me in person. We went to the Washington National Cathedral to celebrate the Supreme Court ruling. That was my idea.

[JW]: They met you? They met you there?

[JH]: Well I was at their house and then we went, because they live in Harrisburg. So, we drove there. This is when I was there last. It was my idea. And the person who did the sermon—Allyson Robinson—she's a very well known trans woman. That's why I wanted to go. And my mom actually, you know, got very emotional.

[JW]: She did?

[JH]: Yeah. And that was good. So things are happening. Very slowly.

[JW]: I'm sorry we're kind of getting, hopping.

[JH]: It's okay.

1:01:02 [JW]: When did you decide to leave your job and why?

[JH]: Part of it was my editor. I didn't like him from day one. We clashed over and over and over again. And then I had wanted to quit for like five years. And I just didn't because I got Wednesdays off and I made decent money. And that's kind of cool. You know?

[JW]: Yes!

[JH]: Yeah. So, in a way it was like, I didn't like the job that much anymore. Not that I didn't like journalism but just like I saw how big agriculture is and I can't write about the truth, and then the whole culture of agriculture. And people assumed that because I wrote for the *Farmer's Exchange* that I had their views. So, they assumed that I was a Republican. They assumed that I was probably anti-gay, just 'cause I'm with these people. And I also learned that people aren't bad. Most people are not bad people even if they had views like that. Like, you can't say they're all bad people. Maybe they're ignorant or haven't been exposed.

1:02:06 [JW]: So it was kind of a growth for you?

[JH]: Yeah. But, basically, I probably outgrew that job after five years. And I don't know. Have you ever outgrown a job?

[JW]: Definitely.

[JH]: So, I was just there because it was the easiest to do, just not to quit. It was good money. It wasn't great money but enough money to live. And I got Wednesdays off and I, basically, whenever I wasn't in the office, I kind of worked the system at that point. So, if I had an interview say, in Valparaiso on Thursday at 10, then I could make that interview go for two hours and then go eat lunch in Valparaiso until, let's say, 1:30. By that time it's 2:30 here, 1:30 there. Oh, come in the office, "Well, the interview went longer than I thought." Things like that. When you start to do that, it's probably time...

1:02:58 [JW]: Your heart's not in it. So then did you do freelance right away after leaving?

[JH]: No, I started freelancing in January of 2014, and I quit at the end of January 2014. So, but I didn't know I was going to quit when I started. I had a friend tell me about *Seedstock*, which is who I write for now. So that's [inaudible] agriculture. And so, I contacted them and they wanted me to write for them. And so, I had my first interview, like, mid-January of 2014. And I think that was probably a pretty pivotal moment because that's when I realized that I freelance. So, if I can do this one client, I could do more clients. And then something happened with my editor. Once again, he got angry at me because I... Well, I was nice to a press secretary.

[JW]: Oh.

1:03:55 [JH]: I wanted to interview Marlin Stutzman on ethanol. And Marlin Stutzman kept not wanting to talk to me. Not rudely, but just not being, you know. And so finally his press—this is not relevant but I'll just—so his press secretary contacted me and wanted to know what we... He asked me questions, so I answered the questions thinking, "Why not?" My editor read the email—did that kind of thing—and he sent me this email saying, "If Marlin's not going to cooperate with you then why are you cooperating with his press secretary? And that's not how to get things done," and blah blah blah blah. And just rude. It was a rude email. I'm like, you know what? I'm done. I don't need this shit. I've put up with this over... This was not very mature. This was on a Wednesday. And he wasn't there. 'Cause I would sometimes go in on Wednesdays just for an hour. And I'm like, I'm done. And I had been wanting to quit for two years and had been talking about quitting. So, I just packed up my office and I wrote him a letter and left it and that was it.

[JW]: That's one way to go.

[JH]: I probably wouldn't do it that way again. But it felt good. Okay, we don't need to go there. We can entertain the people who listen to this later.

1:05:26 [JW]: Absolutely. What about the church at this point in your life? What role did any church have in your life at this point?

[JH]: Yeah. So, the Mennonite Church I go to now, it's called Assembly Mennonite in Goshen and it's near Goshen College, and it's full of professors. It's a very educated church, well-read, liberal, tend to be liberals. I hate that word. Whatever. But you know.

[JW]: How'd you find them or did they find you?

[JH]: A family friend, Al Meyer, who was involved in Goshen College. He was a longtime family friend, so he invited me the very first Sunday that I came here. He took me out to breakfast. And then they have what's called "small groups" that meet in homes once a week, like 8-10 people or so. So, his daughter was one of the leaders of one of the groups, so I was immediately plugged into her group. Which I'm still in now, like, thirteen years later.

And I just remember like, I said before, I saw pink hair and I saw nose rings and I saw all sorts of things I never saw at the Church of Christ. And at first it was like, I liked it, but it was outside of my comfort zone too. Does that make sense?

1:06:39 [JW]: It does. You were kind of moving into a new direction maybe?

[JH]: And I felt like it was so different [from] what I was used to that it took me a while to become part of that church. But then...you don't mind if I expand on this?

Okay, Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, she was in her late 30s and she was a new pastor there, and that was in 2010. And that was probably the year that I first felt like really a part. And part of that was my fault because... Oh yeah, can we backtrack? In Chicago, I went to a United Church of Christ.

[JW]: Yes, you did mention that. Just to try it out.

[JH]: With friends. 'Cause my trans friends went there. And I was like, I'm in a church. As me. And I didn't even know it was me yet. It was still this new persona. And so I did, but I didn't like the church that much. It was, the services, were just kind of eh. So that's when I first thought, why can't I go to my church as me?

1:07:53 And then I wasn't involved at my church for a long time too. That was my fault. It took me a long time to get plugged in. But Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, we really had a cool relationship. She died of a melanoma on her 38th birthday, which is awful. Very sad. But um, how did this happen? Yes, I was on the board of Mosaic. Which was that center in Goshen.

[JW]: Yes.

[JH]: And we had this newsletter, and so we would, like, highlight somebody who, in the LGBT community in Goshen. And so, somebody wrote an article—on the board—wrote an article about me.

[JW]: What did they write?

1:08:41 [JH]: They interviewed me and just kind of like, I forget. Like, I was in Texas and now I'm here. It wasn't like an in-depth thing. And it had my photo, and it said where I went to church in the article, and stuff. And so. How did this all happen? Oh wait, I'm backtracking. I told you I went to the United Church of Christ and then I went...so I wanted to meet with all of my pastors. There are three pastors of my church, and one of them was Heidi. And so, we all met, one on one. I don't know why I had to meet with all of them. And I told them about my journey and they were all very supportive, and that kind of affirmed that I could do this.

[JW]: You could stay there and be a part of it?

[JH]: Yeah. So back to this newsletter. So, a lot of people that went to my church, they subscribe... It was like, and online email. It was a Constant Contact.¹ So, they got it in their inbox. So this one woman who goes to my church, she read it and she's like, I don't know this woman, but she looked kind of familiar but I don't really know her. She goes to Assembly, wait. 'Cause my church is not that big. It's like 250 people. It's not little but it's not huge. She's like, who is this person? And then she realized, oh, it's me. And so, she emailed me. And it was kind of awkward, because what if you get it wrong? But she was like, might this be you? And yes.

1:10:14 [JW]: And you wrote back?

[JH]: Yeah. And then every summer worship the pastors... Or even the whole year pastors don't preach that much, but in the summer, people tell their stories from the lectern. And so that theme for that summer, I forget. But they asked me if I would be willing to come out by saying love your neighbor as yourself? Focusing on the yourself. So, they're like, obviously, if I want to. There was no pushing. And so, I said yes. I will. So that was August 12th of 2012 that I decided that I would do that. And so I covered Indiana State Fair livestock auction the night before.

[JW]: Oh my gosh...

[JH]: Yeah. And so, I spent the night in Indy then I got up really early and drove to Goshen. Was at church by 9. And just nervous beyond belief.

1:11:12 [JW]: What were you nervous about?

[JH]: Just, I was about to come out to the whole congregation. Plus, I don't really like... Well, actually I don't mind it now as much, but at that point the thought of getting up there and doing a sermon. Well, it wasn't really a sermon. But you know, being behind the lectern, I was just...

[JW]: Did you write it out?

[JH]: I did, but I stuttered like you wouldn't believe. And at one point I asked somebody else to read it while I was up there. And then somebody, the same woman that first realized it was me, she called out to me and she's like, I think that you can do this yourself! It was just like...I'm like oh,

¹ Constant Contact is a company that provides users with the opportunity to send mass emails. They are used by organizations large and small to maintain an email list.

okay. And then I did it. I finished it. But it was interesting. And then they also formed... she and this other woman decided that I needed to be part of a woman's group, like a church woman's group. And so they met, like, every so often. A bunch of women.

1:12:16 [JH]: And did you start meeting right away after that point?

[JH]: Yeah.

[JW]: What was it like right after you gave the talk? Did people come up to you? What did they say?

[JH]: They lined up. And I was drenched in sweat. And somebody brought me a water. Yeah. So that was a really pivotal moment.

[JW]: Seems like it.

[JH]: Yeah. And ever since then I've been me at church.

1:12:42 [JW]: What about the job though, still? How does that work?

[JH]: That was a source of major stress, because I was at church as Jeannette. I was working as Andy. And then before that I was known as AJ because AJ is a mixture of Andy Jeannette. So, some people I was AJ; some people I was Andy; some people I was Jeanette.

[JW]: Interesting. So, you chose "AJ" sometimes?

[JH]: Even now I go by AJ sometimes. I think it can be a woman's name too.

[JW]: How does it make you feel to go by AJ?

[JH]: Fine. Andy I don't like at all. AJ is fine 'cause it's a name I chose.

1:13:24 [JW]: You used the term last time we spoke "in limbo." That this was a time period where you sometimes felt in limbo.

[JH]: Something has even happened since we talked last week. Huge. So, I'll say limbo first. It felt like I was in limbo working at the *Farmer's Exchange* as Andy and being Jeannette at church. And there was some overlap—not much. But somebody worked for the Elkhart County Soil and Water, and said, "We always see your articles with Andy Hughes still." He

wasn't like being pushy or rude, but it was kind of like, you know. What's going on? And not in a bad way. And I just felt like... And that was one more impetus for me to quit my job because I'm like, I can't...

1:14:13 But, the whole limbo thing. I feel like I had been in limbo for two years or more. And basically, it's courage to just leave Andy or AJ behind and be a woman. And it's like, first of all, what if it doesn't work? Like, what if I don't do good enough? Or what if I can't do this well enough? Or what if people don't see me as I see myself? 'Cause there definitely is, you know, safety.

And being not, like, you know, does that make sense?

[JW]: Yes.

[JH]: Safety in that people aren't going to think you're weird. You know? I don't know. So, there was this part of me that was fearful. Yeah. I don't know if I mentioned a lot of this when we met before.

[JW]: You did. Maybe not as in depth.

[JH]: So, I do a lot of phone interviews for my current freelancing—a lot of phone interviews. I did over 100 last year. Which is actually, I don't know. And I do not like to work at home. That has nothing to do with this journey, I just do not like being at home. I like to be around people, so like the hospital in Mishawaka or the mall, you know, or...

[JW]: Where there's like, a café?

1:15:37 [JH]: Right, where I don't know people but I can watch people. That's like the perfect place. But since I do phone interviews, people might hear me. Then the fear was what if the voice doesn't match the way I look? So, I opted to go not as Jeannette. Doesn't mean I'm not Jeannette. But I didn't have hair. I would just wear jeans and a T-shirt. And there, you know, they were women's jeans but people don't know that. And so, I began to do some things as Jeannette and some as AJ. Never Andy. I was always AJ or Jeannette. Did I tell you about the whole CIA system in my car?

[JW]: No.

[JH]: I didn't want people in Goshen to see me as AJ anymore. Which is interesting because a lot of people wouldn't want people to see them as...yeah. So, I had this whole system where... My rearview mirrors, in

the center and on the sides, I would adjust so people behind me couldn't see the person in the car.

[JW]: Wow.

[JH]: Like you know, put it out, so nobody. And then, if I thought a car that was coming the opposite way to me was somebody I knew, then I would put my visor down.

1:17:01 [JW]: So, you had to be on high alert.

[JH]: High alert. And then, my routine was that when I went to the mall to do work, I would drive through Starbucks on the way to the mall, which is in Dunlap. Do you know Dunlap?

[JW]: No, I really don't.

[JH]: 33. You know 33 headed toward Goshen to the bypass. So, and I thought, people wouldn't know me there. So, I'm not going to leave my car. So it turns out there's a woman who works there who I knew from Constant Spring, which is a cool bar in Goshen... Where a lot of my friends hang out. But I didn't really know her, other than that. And so, I didn't think that was a big deal. But here's what happened last week. This is actually good, a really good thing. It wasn't good at first, but it's a really good thing.

I got a friend request on Facebook. Okay, her name is Leah, and I didn't know her last name. So, I got a friend request on Facebook from this woman named Leah—but I thought it was this other Leah, so I said yes. But I still wasn't sure who it was. So, I looked at her photos and I'm like, crap, that's the woman at Starbucks. So I'm like, how did she know? Not that I didn't want her know. But she hasn't ever met me as Jeannette because I go there in limbo. Do you follow me?

[JW]: Yes. Totally.

1:18:19 [JH]: And so, I unfriended her because I was mortified. The next morning, I woke up and I'm like, "Why did you unfriend her? Because this might be an opportunity." So, I re-friended her hoping she would say yes, because if you message someone on Facebook who isn't your friend, they don't really get it, or it goes to their "other" mail. So, as soon as she accepted I messaged her, and I said basically what I just now told you. I said this is who I am, but basically, I'm having a hard time living into it. And I go to

Starbucks on the way to the mall, and it's limbo. And I mentioned the whole CIA thing in my car and stuff. And we had a great interaction, and then that led me to tell two of my other women friends. 'Cause I thought maybe if I share this and get it off and be vulnerable, then in the long run that can help me. And that's what I did.

1:19:19 [JW]: And you feel like it is helping you?

[JH]: Yeah. Just getting it out. Mm-hmm. I mean, it doesn't mean I'm not who I am. But I thought people, if they knew that, they would like, oh, you're not a woman, you're just this guy who likes to act like a woman. That's how I thought people would react. Which, I don't fault that at all.

[JW]: That's the thought behind it. You also used this term the last time we met. You used the word, "ghost." I was hoping you could share about that.

1:19:57 [JH]: Yes. So basically, when I'm out and about as AJ, which is often for work, I will focus on the work—the article I'm writing, or the interview I'm doing—but it's like I'm this ghost who is doing the interview. Like it's a person that's not really there. Like, I can't interact with people, or I don't want to interact with people, um, because it's not really me anymore. But the me that's left is just me because of fear. Yeah.

And did I tell you about the baseball game in Baltimore? I was with my parents when I was out there last to a Baltimore Orioles game, took the Baltimore light rail to the ball park. And I, out of fear, went as AJ to the game. And if I could just focus on the actual game, it was fine. But once again, I wasn't really there. It was like the ghost is watching a baseball game. Then I could not, my, you know the term "dysphoria"?

[JW]: Yes.

[JH]: The dysphoria was so bad that I couldn't even interact with women because it was so hard. I'd be thinking I'm one of you, but you can't tell that and how do I...you know, it was so awful.

1:21:20 [JW]: Do you see AJ... Do you see yourself continuing to go as AJ from time to time or not? Do you hope not to?

[JH]: I think maybe Jeannette needs AJ on some level. But I think it needs to be happening less and less to the ultimate point of no more AJ. But I think it's unrealistic to just say never at this point, does that make sense?

[JW]: It does. I think you also applied the term. Maybe I'm wrong. I might be misremembering this. We talked about hormones and being on them, being off them and I feel like you used the term "ghost."

1:22:03 [JH]: I don't know if I told you all about the hormones.

[JW]: We talked about it a little bit, but we haven't talked about it yet today, so, I was hoping that we could go back in time a little bit and talk about that. Like, how that happened.

[JH]: Yes, so I needed to find a therapist. That was kind of a convoluted thing. It's hard to find somebody here.

[JW]: In this area?

[JH]: Yeah. So, it was like, one of my pastors at my church, she had a connection which didn't pan out, but that led to somebody else, which didn't pan out. So, at the very end of that chain, I found somebody in South Bend. Abby Smith. You met?

[JW]: No, I know of the name.

[JH]: She works in South Bend.

[JW]: And so, she wrote a letter of recommendation for you?

[JH]: Yeah. And she's the one who insisted that I go to the transgender support group in South Bend, but I didn't want to. Did I tell you about that?

1:22:57 [JW]: Yes, you did but let's revisit that. So, you didn't want to because...?

[JH]: I had the image that it was a whole bunch of older men who were crossdressers, and they would all meet and talk about their underwear. Abby half hinted that some people were like that.

[JW]: Why do you use the term cross dresser? Well, like, you know, that term has a history. Like, what did you think the men were doing?

[JH]: Fetish. Like, they weren't really...looking back, I was being very judgmental. And that's not even the case, actually. But that's why I didn't want to go. But she said there's no letter until you go.

[JW]: So you went? And that was a few years ago?

[JH]: Two years ago. So, I finally did get the letter after seeing her eight times and going to that group.

1:23:49 [JW]: But the group has been helpful, right? In terms of community? You met some friends?

[JH]: Mm-hmm. It's a motley bunch, but a cool bunch.

[JW]: And what was it like going to the endocrinologist then?

[JH]: Well I went to one in Chicago first which didn't pan out. And so, I found one in South Bend. It didn't pan out in Chicago, just, she had a...it just didn't. Do I need to go there?

[JW]: If you want to.

[JH]: I mean, it's not really important. I just remember that they called me "he" when I went. That was rude. I don't think they meant to do it rudely, I think they were just very ignorant. They just must not have had many trans people before.

[JW]: Got it, that's a telling detail though.

[JH]: Yeah, and I was kind of hurt. But then she like called and cancelled once when I was on the way out there. And at that point I was working still, and it was kind of a big deal for me to get off to make sure I could go to Chicago and then she cancelled. I don't know. It just didn't work. So, I found somebody here in South Bend through my therapist at the South Bend Clinic and he was very good. And he got me on hormones.

1:25:02 [JW]: And so that was a couple years ago still?

[JH]: Yeah. I think so.

[JW]: And what was the experience like being on hormones?

[JH]: I knew what I'd read, but nothing could have prepared me for, like, what happened. It wasn't bad, it was just kind of like... Well, at first you take one dose and nothing happens. I mean, duh. But after a while, my breasts began to hurt.

[JW]: Right.

[JH]: I mean, like, really hurt which, I'm assuming, that's what happens in girls. I'm guessing. I don't know.

[JW]: Probably a varied reaction.

[JH]: Right, but it was all new, like, once again I'm going through puberty. Like, do I really want to? I didn't like puberty before. And I lost pretty much all of my libido.

[JW]: Okay.

[JH]: Which, that was like, it wasn't horrible but it was once again like this is weird. Not weird, no. I felt like I was doing damage to parts of my body that were healthy. And I had a hard time with that, even though I don't really want a penis.

[JW]: Right.

1:26:11 [JH]: You know, it's not like I...you know. But I kept thinking, well, but one could argue that I had this body part that works the way it should be working, you know? And I'm doing something to it that's basically going to cause it to be not functional. Over the course of many days. Does that make sense why that would be a little unnerving?

[JW]: Yes. So, then you decided after a few months...? What happened?

[JH]: Well, I also grew some breast tissue. And then I also read this article... Okay, that this man... I'm on Facebook, and I subscribe to all these transgender stuff, so I read horror story articles all the time. This trans person was murdered. This trans person was homeless. This trans person is, you know, has no money. This trans person can't get a job, whatever. This trans person was beat up.

1:27:13 [JW]: Yeah. But there's success stories!

[JH]: I know, I know, but I was focusing... Then I read one about this man in Scotland—former trans woman who was on hormones and grew pretty sizeable breasts. Decided that he couldn't do it anymore and so went back and now he's this man with huge boobs, and he is made fun of. And so this image I got was... That's me in the future. This ugly man with big, you know. And so, I just, for a while, went off of them. And then I went back on. And then off. And then, my doctor, my family doctor said that's not healthy to do that.

[JW]: To keep switching?

[JH]: You either be on or off. And then I was back on and then there was a, something happened with a refill. 'Cause my doctor said he sent it in but then Walgreens had no record of it.

[JW]: 'Cause he retired, right?

[JH]: He moved to Michigan. So right now, I'm... Basically I've been off them for like six months. And I'm going to have to start over from square one.

1:28:19 [JW]: But you do want to go back on them?

[JH]: I believe so. There's still fears. I don't know how to get over the fear of this not working. And I guess, I mean, it's not like everybody can be a successful... And so, part of me is like, what if it doesn't ever work? And then another part of me knows that I have to be on hormones for it to work. So, it's almost like you have to be all in. You can't do it half assed. You know, I could, you know, just live the rest of my life as Jeannette with no hormones, but I think hormones are there to help.

[JW]: And you, do you want the sex reassignment surgery one day?

[JH]: Yeah, well, assuming the hormones....and I'm only, I'm 44. If I'd known about all this stuff when I was in college or younger, I would have. I even talked about this with my mom last time. And she was like, if you had looked this up when you were a kid, we would not have gone for that. And I've known people who are much older than I am who are transitioning. So, it's not like... I don't feel too old.

1:29:35 [JW]: Did you...when did you hear about...growing up... Did you hear about Christine Jorgensen? Renee Richards?

[JH]: No, but I heard about people getting sex changes, and once again it was instilled in me... Well, I don't know who instilled this, but I thought it was just weird and people were freaks who got sex changes. That was the word, was "sex change." And I remember seeing in one of my friend's books—he had this book of nude women and other stuff (laughs). And I remember one of the photos was this woman who had a sex change, and I don't know if this was a real photo but it was like... It was a man and now it's a woman. She's a woman. And she had a new vagina, but it was like, I think I know how they do it and I don't think this is how they...but it was

like they took a vagina off of a woman, put it on. That's not how they do it. And there were like, stitches, you know. I don't think that's how they do it. But I saw that... That photo, I still remember it.

[JW]: Because it had an effect on you?

[JH]: Yeah. I think that that's really weird.

1:30:39 [JW]: Have you talked about some of these things with the support group or with other folks?

[JH]: Not that.

[JW]: Not that, yeah. So, there's still some, I guess, just some nervousness, right? About the future?

[JH]: Um...

[JW]: I don't want to put words in your mouth.

[JH]: I'm not going to name names. You know at least one of these people. There's one person in particular—and you can probably guess who it is, I'm not going to tell. She, um, she lives, you know, full-time and she's had the surgery and all that, and from the moment I first met her... And I should not help it, and even now I see, you know, "I'm a male." I don't see her as a female. And I don't know why. And it bothers me. Because she is a female. And I just don't have, like... What if I end up and people don't see me as a female? And that bothers me. I saw Caitlyn Jenner's speech, her acceptance speech. Did you see that?

[JW]: I did, yes.

1:32:02 [JH]: I liked it. But then when she opened her mouth, it's like, it didn't fit her voice. I sound very judgmental, I'm sure, but I don't want to... I don't want people to see me... I don't know the word I'm trying to say.

[JW]: It's okay.

[JH]: I feel like an awful person now for saying that, but this is an interview.

[JW]: Please don't. No. Do you think the culture is changing though, just in the way that Caitlyn Jenner is being received and the news coverage and even... We talked about this a little bit, Medicare coverage, and...

[JH]: I do. But I think people who don't like Caitlyn aren't going to all of a sudden like Caitlyn because of what she says.

[JW]: What did you like in what she said?

[JH]: I didn't hear the whole speech. But I heard the part where, you can call me names and that's okay, I can take it.

1:33:00 [JW]: Right. Do you think that there is...what do you think either Goshen, Mishawaka, South Bend can do to move forward? I mean, it's interesting that, you know, with your mayor— ²

[JH]: Not the mayor yet.

[JW]: Yeah, mayor candidate... What else can people do? Politicians? Young people? Teachers? Things like that? I mean, it's a big question I'm asking you.

[JH]: Well, like this man who is running for mayor, he basically said it's going to be an ordinance for non-discrimination. The Republicans don't want it because you can't enforce it; well, it's hard to enforce it. He acknowledges that it's hard to enforce that, but that's not the point. The point is that we have it. And it's a symbol. And that things come out from symbols, grow from symbols. So that's one thing. Education. I think people could know trans people. And less fear.

[JW]: Right. Absolutely... More visibility.

[JH]: 'Cause I think there is maybe some self-hate going on with me. I think I mentioned last time we met that I have some internal phobias regarding trans stuff. And I think that's probably rooted from when I was very young. Just now, that just surfaced. But I mentioned the person you know, that seemed like a man and the voice didn't match. I shouldn't... Well, I don't like to say should or shouldn't...

[JW]: It's okay.

² Dr. Wagman is likely referring to Jeremy Stutsman, then candidate and later elected as Mayor of Goshen, Indiana. At the time of this interview, the Goshen City Council was debating expanding the city's human rights ordinance to include LGBTQ language. A month after this interview in August 2015, the Council narrowly voted against it. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Stutsman's predecessor, Mayor Kauffman, issued an Executive Order applying protections for LGBTQ city employees. For more, see <http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Goshen-mayor-to-issue-executive-order-to-protect-LGBT-community-321808122.html>

[JH]: It's almost like I don't accept these people, and I hate that. So where does that come from?

1:34:39 [JW]: Right. I mean, if you think about, like, Bangkok versus, like, many American cities, I don't know... I mean, I teach Gender Studies; I have my own theories about things. I've read people, but culture is constructed a certain way, right? So, if you grow up seeing something, people acting a certain way, behaviors, norms, and it's all normalized, and it's received, well, that's a different experience, you know? I don't think America is quite like that yet. Do you?

[JH]: No.

[JW]: But maybe there is, I mean... Hope springs eternal. I don't know.

[JH]: [inaudible] performance? I don't want to lead this astray. But what Allyson Robinson, remember I told you?

[JW]: What did she say?

[JH]: She said, well, she went to West Point. She went to Baylor Seminary. She talked about war, basically the culture of war. She said that she's a culture warrior. She talks a lot about forgiveness, us forgiving the other side, more in dialogue. And that's all I could remember. It's on tape, or, on DVD, or, on YouTube.

[JW]: I'll look at that. I would love to see that.

1:36:09 [JH]: One thing I was really... that hit me. Once again, kind of goes hand in hand with what I just now said. She "passed," you know? "Passed." I even asked my dad, I said, "If you didn't know she was trans from me, would you have known?" He said, "No, I wouldn't have known." And I think that's what I... That's who I hold up as role models, people like her. So, there's a lot of performance? Which is unhealthy I think, in a way...

[JW]: But how do you get away from that?

[JH]: I don't know. Sorry, I think I'm very hard on myself. Like, when I feel that I don't live up to...that ideal. And what is the ideal anyway? I mean. And I was talking today to one of the women who's hosted the meeting with the mayor candidate. She's a lesbian—or, she's bisexual. Very active in the community. But she would admit, she would be a self-professed, you know, she's more butch than femme. But she said that her whole life,

she's had problems in women's bathrooms. Like, "sirred." And somebody says, "This is the women's bathroom. The men's bathroom is that way." She's a born woman. Not trans. So, see, it even happens...

[JW]: Absolutely.

[JH]: So, what is the ideal that we're all...

1:37:31 [JW]: I don't know. I mean, we talked about this last time. What makes a woman? If you could speak to that a little bit here...

[JH]: Yeah, I mean. Okay, I went with Andrea actually. Andrea at that point was Andy, but yeah, we went to the consignment shop. Has she mentioned to you? In South Bend? It's on Miami Street. She goes there all the time, and we go there sometimes. She loves it. You can like go to the basement and fill up a whole grocery bag of clothes for \$7, okay. And so, she and I went there and so we were down—she was "Andy" at that point 'cause she was working. Again, and I went as me, Jeannette. And then two other women were down there and I don't... I think being a woman is about relationships.

1:38:16 [JW]: That's interesting.

[JH]: The way that you, we interact. 'Cause I noticed that when I am presenting as Jeannette versus AJ, the way that other women and I interact is different. They say things they wouldn't say to me. And it's not superficial things. It's just more, like, I don't know.

[JW]: Like, what kind of things?

[JH]: Well, like the woman at the consignment shop. She was an African American. She was getting married. So, she held up this wedding dress that she liked. She asked me if I thought it was cute. You wouldn't be asking a guy that, I don't think. And then she was saying how her thighs probably were way too big to fit in it. And you would never say that to a guy, I don't think.

It's so, like, I mean, just things like, when I meet with other women friends, just what we talk about and just... It's that deep relationship stuff, and I don't know how to put a finger on that yet. And I got the other side too, 'cause I spent most of my life as a guy and that's way different too because... A lot of this does kind of fall into "male roles." But there is some truth to it. Some truth. Not absolute. But when I went with people in

college, guy friends and stuff, we would watch baseball, drink beer and we wouldn't talk really. It was fun, I mean, there's more to it. It's more complex than that. But there is some kernels of truth to that. I mean, would you agree?

[JW]: I think, you know....

[JH]: Or maybe I'm being way too simplistic.

1:40:06 [JW]: No... What do I personally think about that? I think a lot of things about that. Again, I teach Gender Studies and we talk about this all the time. So, some I think is cultural—that men are taught not to talk. Men are taught not to cry. Right, but not to maybe emote, to be expressive. So, I don't know. But if we weren't taught that...but how do you strip that off? How do you remove all these ways that society teaches you things about gender? I think that's the big question. I don't know. Maybe things are changing. Maybe it's slow.

[JH]: Maybe I'm perpetuating the whole... I hope not.

[JW]: No, no. I mean, I'm a mother. I think raising kids has really affected my ideas about gender, because... We don't do TV but my kids ask me things anyway. And I'm like, "Whoa. I didn't teach you that." I'm just one person though. So that's a little about what I think.

1:41:13 It's hard. It's hard to pin down. My students and I get in these conversations all the time where we think we got it and then...what about this? What about the body, what about the experience? Well, what about the mind? I think it's hard to pinpoint.

I really like this theorist Judith Butler. She does a pretty good job...

[JH]: I should read her.

[JW]: Yeah, she came to town. Maybe she'll come back.

[JH]: That was last year, wasn't it? I missed it. And I've also been really attracted to *The Sacred Feminine*. That has been borne the last six. But you know... I love Mary Magdalene, and that really speaks to me in ways that male characters don't from the Bible. And I can't. None of this I can put my finger on though.

1:42:08 [JW]: Right, it's hard to articulate. I read something once by a scholar, that as soon as you start, that it's hard to talk about both gender and sexuality because of the culture we're raised in. That as soon as you start articulating it, it gets complicated because of emotions.

[JH]: I think sexuality and gender just is. In a way. I mean, it's more. Well, and not just...but if you say to somebody who is gay, "Why are you gay?" Well I don't think most gay people can answer that other than, "I just am." Why are you trans? Why are you cis? Why are you straight? 'Cause I am. I mean, does that...?

[JW]: Um, absolutely. I know people that would argue against that though too. Like, I know folks that might say that, well, sometimes sexuality... You chose based on people. I've known, like, people [who are] bisexual who've said that... that argue against that. But then I've known other people who don't.

1:43:17 [JH]: But even then, you could say, "Why are you attracted to that person?" I just am. Well, because of their nose, because of their lovely voice. It's like I'm trans. I know I'm trans. I know how deep it is. But if you ask me why, I don't know. I have no clue. I sometimes wish I wasn't. It'd be a lot easier.

[JW]: Well, that's why I'm doing this project in a lot of ways—so that there's more understanding about being transgender and being transgender here in this geography and this culture and climate. Because I think those stories need to be heard by our students, by a lot of people. So, I appreciate you taking your time and sharing stories—stories that are so personal but also very moving. Really. So, I think we answered my questions. Do you have other questions that you wanted to speak to? You know, I'll probably get home...

1:44:32 [JH]: I'm trying to think. Well, I just think about the stuff that we've been talking about all the time. All the time. I ask myself, "Why am I so judgmental to other trans people." And I hate that.

[JW]: You say you're hard on yourself. I think even the word "judgmental"—you're being hard on yourself too. I think identity is... When it comes to identity, there's a lot of, like, you know, hurdles.

[JH]: Yeah, I ask myself, like, at home if I were to take off my wig, or hair—I hate the word "wig"—and just put on a guy's t-shirt, then am I somebody else?

1:45:20 [JW]: Yes, so, what do you think about that?

[JH]: No. I think I'm always Jeannette.

[JW]: Yeah. Right.

[JH]: I always have been Jeannette, looking back. Even at age 5, when I said if you could please refer to me as Sandy, that was Jeannette talking. I just didn't know it.

[JW]: There's some transgender books for young kids that I own, but they weren't out when you and I were kids. It's newer. But if they had been and you had read them, do you think it would have affected you?

[JH]: No, well, because my parents probably would have resisted.

1:46:05 [JW]: Yeah. Are there other things you'd like to say in our time together now that we didn't get to? Anything, in terms of finding your way or religiously or thoughts about the future? Or something?

[JH]: It's interesting. I told you that I'm in limbo, in terms of some places I go as AJ and some as Jeannette. I hate that. The places that I go to as Jeannette I don't want to go back to AJ. So that's kind of...very obvious. Like in church, I have no desire to be him. It's all fear, dealing with fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of not being able to find work—which is a real fear. Fear of being harassed. I get asked by people, people ask me if I ever get harassed, and it bothers me that they ask that.

1:47:05 Like, I had two friends, good friends of mine in Goshen that go to my church say, "Have you ever been harassed?" And I think you wouldn't be asking me that if I wasn't trans. And I have never been harassed, but that makes me very anxious to, like, when will it happen.

[JW]: What about travel—in terms of where you're going to travel next? Do you still seek international travel like you once did?

[JH]: Well, that bothers me too because I'm really drawn to exotic destinations. Like Afghanistan, or Iran, or North Korea. [laughs] A lot of those places are not gay friendly. I actually read there's, like, seventy-nine countries that are officially anti-gay. I saw this video that came out of Moscow, and there were two gay men walking down the street. Did you see this video?

[JW]: No.

[JH]: They were holding hands, and they were showing what happens to gay people in Moscow. So, one man bumped into them as hard as he could and he yelled something over and over and over again. And I'm like, I don't know. Just the whole... Airports. Dealing with airports. I flew to L.A. last month for a conference, and I could have gone as me and I... Once again... fear. My editor said, sure, I don't care what you look like; just do good work for us. And I didn't... 'cause, you know, fear, again, fear.

[JW]: Fear of security at the airport, asking?

1:48:38 [JH]: And fear... I'd met these people before at the conference and I didn't want the awkwardness. So, I was a ghost again. Kind of. But at the airport, at the airport in Phoenix, we changed planes and there was a trans woman getting on the plane—on my airplane. And she was obviously trans. She looked fine. But I could tell. This one guy kept, I don't know... You know how in airports there's always some, I don't know, off—not always but some, um, I don't know the word. Um, man who is maybe not very.... social graces, lacking. It was a man like that. He kept looking at her like this [moved head up and down]. Over and over again. And I'm thinking, stop. He kept doing it. But she didn't let it phase her. And I'm thinking, I should have done that...

[JW]: Did you talk to her at all?

[JH]: No. I wanted to, but our seats... I don't know where she sat. It was like, in line on the airplane... but I never got a chance. I wanted to talk to her. And I didn't see her after deplaning.

[JW]: Yeah.

[JH]: But yeah. It's fear. And I think a lot of trans people have that fear.

1:49:57 [JW]: What about sexual orientation? We talked about this a little bit last time, that growing up, your mom said that... but then you started to meet people. You even told me a story last time about... I don't know where you were, but you were with somebody—maybe in the car or something—and they said, "Oh I'm gay." And it changed your....

[JH]: Yeah, I can repeat that if you like. I was working at the Gap at Century City, west L.A. A lot of gay people working there. I was in college, but I was still kind of naïve. So, I took him home—manager asked me to

give him a ride. And I said, "I can't... All these gay people who work here." And he said, "I'm gay." And that was very turning point. I felt like an idiot.

1:50:37 [JW]: Just in terms of... A turning point in your...

[JH]: In my outlook. And even now, I think... I don't think anybody... But you know there's male and female and then all in between? I think same with gay and straight, and I even realize that I'm probably not 100% straight. In fact—I can't go TMI here, can I?

[JW]: I don't think so. Can't offend me (laughs). Well, I guess you could if you tried.

[JH]: Well I don't want to try. I was at [inaudible] that bar I told you about, and I had had a little too much to drink. Not overly. And there was this guy next to me, and he, you know, acted like he wanted to dance. And we went back to the bar and then we kissed, actually made out. And I actually thought it was good. And I'm like, wow, this is a guy I'm kissing!

[JW]: For the first time.

[JH]: Yeah. We like, really... And I'm like, interesting. And I never thought that would be fun, but it was. Not that I'm...

[JW]: Yeah... I would say, see what happened...

1:51:58 [JH]: Yeah. Just. Yeah. So, I think the whole thing is, like, gay, bi-, trans. It's not about gender or sex. I think it's about being who you are. Living authentically. Would you agree with that?

[JW]: Absolutely. That's what I teach. Exactly what you just said – that's how I start class, saying this is a spectrum, and then students start asking questions.

[JH]: And then courage to be out on that spectrum.

[JW]: Yes. (pause). Well, I know what I'll do is I'll go home later and start thinking, "Oh! Why didn't I ask that?"

[JH]: I know how that goes. Feel free to call or email.

1:52:44 [Audio ends]